

Area Transportation Partnership 7 (ATP 7)

Draft Minutes of March 10, 2023, Meeting – MnDOT, Mankato (in-person and via Teams)

Members Present: Jack Kolars, Greg Ous, Nick Klisch, Patrick La Course, Robert Goblirsch, Shawn Schloesser, Lisa Bigham, Dave Tieg, Jeff Johnson, Seth Greenwood, Richard Peterson, Zak Tess

Members Absent: Don Wachal

Others Present: Sam Parker, Angie Piltaver, Matt Rottermond, Deb Yates, Angelica Tejada, Parker Pendergast, Joe Stadheim, Joel Hanif, Jeremy Monahan, Mark Sehr, Dan Sarff, Paul Vogel, Michael McCarty, Mark Konz, Christopher Talamantez, Brad Utecht, Anna Pierce, Rosemary Bruce-White, Troy Nemmers

Welcome, introductions, and opening business (Jack Kolars)

- ATP reviewed January 13, 2023 meeting notes
- Legislator/legislative staff updates – no legislative staff present

Budget status and FY 23-26 STIP amendments and modifications

- Budget update: Greg Ous provided a budget update. Legislature approved the bill to authorize MnDOT's budget authority in February, so those funds coming into the program. Greg provided an overview of revenue estimates to the ATP. He stated that revenue projections for the Highway User Tax Distribution Fund are lower in this fiscal year than anticipated and will be something to watch moving forward. The Legislature has proposed adjusting registration fees to potentially help backfill shortages.
- Local projects: Deb Yates reviewed three local projects that have been amended in the FY23-26 STIP. Projects were in Cottonwood County, Rock County and in Mankato, at MSU Mankato. Third project is a CRP Transit project selected for FY 23.
- MnDOT projects: Matt Rottermond reviewed the FY23-26 STIP amendments on the MnDOT system, including projects on MN 60, MN 19 and US14. Project on US14 had to be updated to reduce the project limits and change the description due to insufficient funding.

Draft Area Transportation Improvement Program (ATIP)

1. Updated funding targets
 - Sam Parker reviewed the updated funding targets with the ATP.
 - TA funds more than doubled. Using some funds on projects with TA eligible items.
 - Bridge on-system funding was added but likely will not extend beyond 2026.
 - PROTECT extends to 2027, but ATP only programming 2024 and 2025. No criteria established; a statewide plan will be developed with project selection guidance for 2024.
 - Carbon Reduction Program extends to 2027. Programming funds for FY 24. Statewide plan being developed with guidance on project selection criteria for 2024.
2. ATP-7 committee recommendations
 - STP-Rural (*Nick Klisch*)
 - Nick Klisch presented STP-Rural selections to the ATP. All projects from FY 24-26 were able to receive additional funds
 - For FY 27, Blue Earth County and Nobles County projects were selected with \$1.995M each

- STP-Small Urban (*Michael McCarty*)
 - Michael McCarty presented the STP-Urban projects to the ATP. Projects from FY24-26 were provided additional funds to be closer to the 80% funding allowed.
 - For FY27, New Ulm and North Mankato projects received most of the funds. Mankato received \$100,000 toward the Vets Bridge. This is a shared MnDOT/Mankato project. Mankato portion is \$10M approximately.
 - Transportation Alternatives (*Sam Parker*)
 - Sam Parker presented the TA projects. Worthington and Mankato will receive FY27 funds. Eagle Lake also applied and can deliver earlier, using FY26 funds.
 - There will be \$230K of remaining funds to hold as a set aside from FY27, and there are remaining funds from FY24-26. We will have a recommendation on how to use the leftover funds at the June meeting.
3. ATP-7 IJIA Task Force recommendations (*Sam Parker*)
- PROTECT and Carbon Reduction Program – centralized guidance will be released in 2024 on these. In the meantime, an ATP-7 Task Force was created and developed scoring criteria. Not enough time to solicit adequately for FY23. Recommendation to ATP is to solicit again and then make selections at June meeting. Application will be open again on the website.
 - On System Bridge – Task force also designated funds for FY24 - FY26. Projects awarded were in Rock County, Blue Earth County and Mankato (Vets Bridge).
 - Next steps – May 19th Solicitation deadline. Programming in June. Keeping funds as set asides for now.
4. Statewide selection recommendations (*Deb Yates*)
- Bridge Off-System (BROS) – Deb Yates presented the BROS selections. State Aid Office (CO) makes the final selections from District State Aid Engineer and county engineer recommendations. City of Fairmont, and Faribault, Jackson, Nobles and Le Sueur counties received FY24 – FY27 funds.
 - Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) – Deb Yates presented the selected HSIP projects. Waseca County projects funded in 2027. New Ulm RAB at Highland Avenue will get \$350K in 2024 (additional funds for a programmed project). Waseca County also had a project funded FY 25, Le Sueur County received an additional \$250,000 in FY 25 for the CSAH 21 & TH 22 RAB project that is currently programmed, Cottonwood County had a project funded in FY 26.
 - Rail crossings – projects in Blue Earth, Watonwan, Brown, and Le Sueur counties to get funds.
 - Transit – various Mankato Transit projects funded for FY 24-27.
5. State Highway Projects
- 2024-2026 ATIP, 2027 candidates and flex projects – Sam Parker showed a handout of the ATIP map with projects programmed for FY24-26 and projects added in 2027.
 - Greg pointed out a US 59 project from Worthington to Fulda is being prepared as a flex project that can be ready for FY 2026 funds should some become available.
 - Jack Kolars asked about the project on Hwy 93. Sam indicated it will be let in December for 2024. We have \$20M in bond funds for the project, and are hopeful for additional funds to come into the district, with a contingency being move out the Hwy 60 Lake Crystal project if needed. Greg indicated this will be a 2-year project and is a possibly a fit for PROTECT funding.

6. Next steps in the ATIP process

- Open House is next – SRDC and RNDC have scheduled Open House meetings for late March or early April. Draft ATIP due in between. July is the final submittal date. If we have changes that are needed after the TP&IC meeting (funding distribution), Greg stated we will inform the ATP.

Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan (MnSHIP) update (Brad Utecht)

Brad Utecht provided a presentation and discussed the MnSHIP update.

- Brad provided an overview of MnSHIP, reviewed the revenue sources, and indicated the next 20-year revenue estimates will be \$30-33B.
- There are five different investment categories.
- First public engagement period ran from mid-July to early October of 2022
 - Two main questions: What would be your approach and what should our priorities be?
- 2600 total responses for various engagement types (online, community events, etc.)
 - Survey identified “Improve Mobility for All Highway Users” was a top ranked choice among respondents, but priorities for investments – very similar top three among different groups
- Draft investment direction was developed using input. 20-year funding targeted at \$31.5B total.
 - Invest to maintain existing system
 - 60% toward maintaining system
 - Bridge condition investment will be increased
 - Blatnick Bridge in Duluth is a major risk ... assuming we will fund outside of MnSHIP
 - Pavement and other roadside infrastructure outcomes in line with 2017 plan outcomes
 - Improve mobility, accessibility, and safety for all
 - Increasing funding in ADA compliance by 2037. Expanding this to ped bridges, multi-use trails and rest areas.
 - Addressing gaps
 - Focus on traffic management, e.g. MnPass lanes, etc.
 - Continue to invest in freight improvements, safety, and first/last mile improvements
 - Improving transit stops and bus only lanes on shoulders
 - Begin to Adapt to a Changing Future
 - Restart flood mitigation program to address 10-12 locations
 - Invest in proactive projects for prevention of flooding, erosion, etc.
 - Add/improve green infrastructure
 - Invest in fiber network expansion
 - Piloting technology advancements (e.g. autonomous vehicle pilot projects, etc.)
 - Focus on Communities and Livability
 - 100 livability projects (reuse of under-bridge areas, better lighting, aesthetics)
 - Local priority and locally-led projects on state highways
 - Support economic development (e.g. TED/TEDI)
- 2nd round of engagement will ask for input on the draft investment direction
- Using the draft investment direction – asking people for priorities if we have additional revenue.
- ATP members encouraged to share the link online and to reach out to Brad for presentations.
- Timeline: Now to end of April – 2nd PE, summer 2023 compile results, adopt plan in Fall of 2023.
- Nick Klisch asked how the funding has been affected by public input – wanted to express concern that MnDOT could be directing too much funding away from pavements and bridges based on 2500 responses from the public.

MnDOT Capital Highway Investment Plan update (Sam Parker)

- Sam Parker shared the CHIP targets with the ATP. This follows the new MnSHIP guidance. Showed a chart comparing the old and new targets along with the changes created by the draft guidance.

Transportation updates

1. MAPO (*Paul Vogel*)
 - Paul Vogel shared that revisions are being made to the CSAH 5 study currently underway and that the study will wrap up this year. Consultants selected for the three studies previously advertised will get underway soon.
 - On discretionary grant programs, they are finding there are federal “hooks” in some of the law. Will continue working with MnDOT on interpreting the regulations, which are to improve infrastructure and create jobs.
 - Draft TIP will be released in late May.
2. Transit (*Patrick LaCourse and Shawn Schloesser*)
 - a. Patrick LaCourse provided an update.
 - Brown County Heartland Express along with several others are participating in the MnDOT pilot Mobility as a Service (MaaS) program. There are brochures in all vehicles.
 - Bus prices have increased again. Their share for new buses went from \$24,000 to \$46,000. State is going to provide additional funds to help offset costs.
 - b. Shawn Schloesser provided an update.
 - Working on their 2023 Strategic Plan. Plan will identify and set direction on filling gaps.
 - Requested assistance with purchasing equipment to meet evolving technology needs.
 - Mobility as a Service pilot program – participating in this along with others. Provides an App for transit users to plan transit rides and purchase tickets electronically.
3. Regional Development Commissions (*Joel Hanif and Rosemary Bruce-White*)
 - a. Joel Hanif – Region Nine Development Commission
 - Joel shared that RNDC is wrapping up its Local Human Services Coordination Plan and is continuing conversations with various organizations about becoming the host agency for the RTCC. They are also working on the Madelia SRTS Plan. They have filled most of the open TAC membership slots.
 - Bike and ped advocacy groups – MDH and Alta Design Group talked with Region Nine about hosting some Walkable Community workshops. This would be in the summer.
 - St. Peter – Smallest Cog Bike Shop – Active Transportation Summit being discussed with the owner
 - b. Rosemary Bruce-White – Southwest Regional Development Commission
 - SRDC TAC Meeting – March 29th (10 a.m. – 12 pm)
 - Regional Trails Planning – Corridor from Luverne to Pipestone along Hwy 75. The group would rather hold off for potential for off-road trail instead. Group is looking to establish Regional Significance status first. Trail would be Luverne to Pipestone and off to the west to go into Jasper from a county road. This is a shared interest among the Rock and Pipestone counties, and cities of Luverne and Pipestone.

Meeting Adjournment

- Greg Ous welcomed back Jeff Johnson and thanked him for his service.
- Jack Kolars provided closing remarks.
- Next meeting tentatively scheduled for June 9, 2023.